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ABSTRACT

This resource list is designed to assist alcoholism counselors and treatment staff members working with homosexual clients as well as homosexuals concerned with alcohol and drug abuse in their communities. The materials are divided according to type, i.e., pamphlets, films, professional articles, and literature produced by national associations. An annotation is provided for each reference in addition to ordering and cost information. (Author/HLM)

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Lesbians, Gay Men and Their Alcohol and Other Drug Use:

Resources

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"OH, NO ...

FALL, FALL ALCOHOL."

MEG CHRISTIAN

Words to song written for the Alcoholism Center for Women used by permission of Thumbelina Music.

"Lesbians, Gay Men and Their Alcohol and Other Drug Use: Resources" was written and compiled by Susan Christenson and Gayle Ihlenfeld with assistance from Janice Kinsolving.

Revised Edition, 1980

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INTRODUCTION

This resource list was written for several groups of people. First, it was meant for alcoholism counselors and treatment staff members. Kinsey estimated that 10% of the American population may be gay. Therefore, even if they are unaware of their clients' lifestyles, most counselors will treat lesbians and gay men at some time. They all should be aware of and sensitive to the needs of gays seeking treatment. The materials listed here can help them reach this understanding. Second, this list was compiled for lesbians and gay men who are concerned with alcohol and drug abuse in their communities. Finally, the following books and articles would be useful to anyone who wanted to develop a better understanding of lesbians and gay men.

The special needs of lesbians and gay men with drinking problems have been largely ignored by alcohol and other drug abuse agencies. Although a gay orientation in no direct way causes alcoholism, drinking problems are common in the gay community. Accurate figures are difficult to obtain, but it is estimated that up to one out of three gay people has problems with alcohol. It is likely that two major factors contribute to the problem of gay alcoholism:

1) personal pressure on the gay individual as a result of society's hostility toward and rejection of homosexuality

2) a lack of alternatives to bars as a place for gays to socialize and be themselves.

There are few helping professionals trained to meet the needs of the gay community. When special training is provided it tends to focus on gay men, inappropriately generalizing to the needs of lesbians.

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Since the problems of men and women differ, it is incorrect to assume their needs are them same.

Recognizing that gay alcoholism is a problem, we have annotated some of the few articles, pamphlets and films available on this subject. Overall, the materials listed present a sensitive discussion of alcohol-related problems in the gay community. Unfortunately, a few inaccurate stereotypes about homosexuals are perpetuated in some of the writings. Despite their faults, these articles were included on the list because they contain valuable information and basically positive attitudes toward gay issues. All of the materials mentioned in this resource list, plus some additional titles, can be read at the Women's Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Resource Center, which is housed at the Wisconsin Clearinghouse. Please call in advance for use of the Resource Center (608) 263-6886.

ALCOHOL PAMPHLETS

"The Gay Drinking Problem . . . There is a Solution," by John Michael. (CompCare Publications: 2415 Annapolis Lane, Suite 140, Minneapolis, MN 55441). (1976). 15 Pp. 60¢. Written by a gay man who believes his experience applies to both gay men and lesbian women. He makes the point that gay or not, he needed help for his treatment of alcoholism. Discusses the importance of alcohol and bars in the gay life style and the disproportionate rate of alcoholism within that population group as compared to the general population. Concludes with information on Alcoholics Together (AT) and Gay Alcoholics Anonymous (GAA) in addition to other appropriate sources.

"Sober, Clean, & Gay," by John Michael. (CompCare Publications). (1978). 19 Pp. 65¢. Written by a gay man for other gay men who are beginning the road to recovery. Focuses on taking responsibility for one's life and taking active steps to change. Discusses different types of programs and what one can expect at AA and Alcoholics Together meetings. Encourages the individual to accept self and gayness. Good discussion of sexuality and choosing meaningful relationships. Ends with a listing of resources for where to get help.

"The Homosexual Alcoholic. AA's Message of HOPE to Gay Men and Women," Unsigned. (Tucker: P.O. Box 4623, Arlington, VA 22204). (1979). 6 Pp. 10¢. Written by gay AA members for lesbians and gay men with drinking problems. Describes gay AA groups in which members can achieve sobriety in an atmosphere of total honesty and acceptance. Stresses the importance of affirming one's gay lifestyle while recognizing alcoholism, not homosexuality, as a problem. Generally describes a positive approach to gay sobriety, although it occasionally lapses into stereotyping of homosexuals.

"What Are You Doing In The Closet?" Unsigned. (Alcoholism Center for Women: 1147 South Alvarado Street, Los Angeles, CA 90006). (1979). 8 Pp. Free (up to 10 copies). This pamphlet, written for lesbians, begins with a discussion of the reasons why the alcoholism rate in the lesbian community is significantly higher than in the heterosexual population. One example is the unresponsiveness of traditional alcoholism services to the lesbian alcoholic. It also includes consciousness raising information in the form of quotations from lesbian alcoholics, a list of questions to promote thinking about attitudes, and a quiz about alcohol and women.

FILM

Gay, Proud and Sober. 1978, 16 mm, color, 22". Distributed by Bronson Films: 1155 N. Bronson Ave., Hollywood, CA 90035. (213) 467-1609. Documentary film that examines the needs of the alcoholic in the gay community. Discusses the difficulties of gay men and lesbian women in their efforts to seek help through traditional sources. Aimed at helping the individual affirm her/his gayness, develop a strong sense of self, and thus reject dependence on alcohol. For general consciousness raising and staff training.

ARTICLES FROM THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE

"Alcoholism and Co-Alcoholism," Pp. 73-82, In: M. O'Donnel, et al., *Lesbian Health Matters! A Resource Book About Lesbian Health.* (Santa Cruz, Women's Health Center, 250 Locust Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060). (1979). 102 Pp. $3.75. Explains that although social oppression leads to a high rate of alcoholism in the lesbian community, this should not be used by lesbians to justify their heavy drinking. Also lists the warning signs of alcoholism and co-alcoholism (a relationship pattern in which a significant other person becomes "addicted" to rescueing the alcoholic). Warns lesbians that they cannot use the heterosexism of existing treatment programs as an excuse to continue drinking. Also stresses the need for more treatment centers staffed by lesbians.

"Alcoholism and the Gay Community," by T. O. Ziebold. (Whitman-Walker Clinic: 1606 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009). (1978). 7Pp. Written about the gay community in Washington, D.C., the article provides a good discussion of why gay drinkers have a high rate of alcoholism. The importance of including lovers and other significant people in the treatment process is emphasized. The author urges the gay community to develop treatment programs for gay alcoholics as a demonstration of "gay pride" at work.

"Alcoholism and the Lesbian Community," by B. Weathers. (Alcoholism Center for Women: 1147 S. Alvarado Street, Los Angeles, CA 90006). (1976). 9 Pp. Attempts a societal perspective on problems of being lesbian and an alcoholic. Explodes myths and sterotypes surrounding lesbians. States that some of the major reasons

why lesbians drink are because 1) they are an oppressed minority 2) they must frequent bars to meet and 3) because most treatment agencies give little or no support. Ends by listing treatment needs of lesbian alcoholics.

"Alcohol Problems in Several Midwestern Homosexual Communities," by L.J. Lohrenz, et al. *Journal on Studies on Alcohol*. Vol. 39 (11): 1959-1963. (1978). This study focuses on the extent and nature of alcohol problems in several midwestern gay communities. The conclusions are that 3 out of 10 members of the community have or will have serious problems with alcohol. The authors suggest that 1) professionals need to change their attitudes toward gays seeking help and 2) acceptance of client's sexual preference is essential to success.

"Counseling Homosexual Alcoholics: Ten Case Histories," by E.J. Small and B. Leach. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*. Vol. 38 (11): 2077-2086. (1977). The conclusions drawn from the case histories dispute past theory that homosexuality is a cause of alcoholism. Evidence suggests that alcoholics who accept their gayness then find it easier to accept the diagnosis of alcoholism and recognize the need for abstinence from alcohol. The cases support the contention that many problems attributed to gay lifestyle are actually due to society's fear and subsequent oppression of gay people.

"The Gay Addict in a Drug and Alcohol Abuse Therapeutic Community," by H.J. Freudenberger. *Homosexual Counseling Journal*. Vol. 3 (1): 34-45. (1976). Discusses how heterosexual norms are forced on gay addicts in therapeutic communities. Emphasizes the need to change the prejudicial attitudes of both staff members and residents of therapeutic communities toward

lesbians and gay men. Although a few stereotypes are perpetuated in the article, the special concerns of lesbians are sensitively addressed.

"The Heterosexual Norm in Chemical Dependency Treatment Programs: Some Personal Observations," by G. Shoener. *STASH Capsules*. Vol. 3 (1). (Jan. 1976). 4 Pp. Concerned with both gay men and lesbians, this article focuses on treatment for alcohol and other drug problems. It is suggested that providers of treatment confront their own homophobia (fear of people of the same sex) and reconsider their own sterotypes of gay men and lesbians. Counselors are reminded to treat the problem their client is seeking help for (chemical dependency) and not try to change a client's affection/sexual preference, as attempts to do so can add obstacles to successful treatment. Good section on understanding the special environmental problems of gays (such as loss of parental rights and employment problems) which are too often ignored by treatment programs.

"The Isolation of the Lesbian Alcoholic," by M. Martin. *Frontiers. A Journal of Women Studies.* Vol. 4 (2): 32-34. (1979). In addition to providing her personal story, the author lists the five common experiences of a lesbian in treatment: 1) services are denied; 2) services are provided in a negative atmosphere which is not conducive to growth and sobriety; 3) the focus is placed on "curing" lesbianism rather than dealing with alcoholism; 4) the counselor allows the lesbian to use her identity as part of her denial system; 5) the counselor accepts lesbianism, but does not have an understanding of lesbian behaviors, attitudes, or lifestyles.

"It Isn't Easy Being Gay," by L. White. Pp. 175-181, In: Bauman, A. *Women in Treatment; Issues and Approaches. Resource Manual.* (National Drug Abuse Center: 1901 North Moore Street, Arlington, VA 22209). (1976). 332 Pp. Written to encourage treatment staff members to question their own stereotypes of lesbians. Also important for those counselors who do not have personal difficulty with a client's sexual preference, but who may not be sensitive to the client's encounters with a society which does have such difficulty.

"On My Way to Nowhere: An Analysis of Gay Alcohol Abuse and an Evaluation of Alcoholism Rehabilitation Services of the Los Angeles Gay Community," by L. Fifield. (Gay Community Services Center: P.O. Box 38777, Hollywood, CA 90028). (1975). 200Pp. $10.00. In this pioneer study of alcoholism in the Los Angeles gay community, Fifield found that one in three gay people abuse alcohol and are either alcoholics or heading toward that destination.

To reach her conclusion, Fifield studied gay bar users and their drinking patterns as reported by themselves and bartenders. She also questioned alcoholism treatment staff members and found judgemental and restrictive attitudes toward gays which would seriously hinder the gay alcoholic's recovery process.

"Reaching the Lesbian Alcoholic," presented at Summer School of Alcohol & Sexuality Alumni Institute, Rutgers University, (1978). 7 Pp. Written from the lesbian women's perspective. Tells lesbian alcoholics the major groups they can get in touch with for help. Explains why it is often important to have separate groups for lesbians. Covers the inadequacies of traditional agencies in serving this population group. Discusses treatment process of working with gay people and the issue of sexuality. Ends with guidelines for how agencies can better serve the lesbian client.

"Treatment for Gay Problem Drinkers," by S. Beaton and N. Guild. *Social Casework*. Vol. 57: 302-308. (May, 1976). This is a report of a special project in Massachusetts where alcoholism counselors from a local hospital met with members of the Gay Union office to design a mixed group for gay men and lesbians with drinking problems. Provides a detailed outline of how the group was set up and how various members responded to the two facilitators who were both heterosexual. Also gives an overview of twelve group sessions.

AWARENESS MATERIALS

This selection was compiled for a variety of reasons and for diverse populations.

FOR NON-GAY PERSONS: Considering the high percentage of people who are gay (possibly 1 out of 10), it is likely that we all interact with lesbians and gay men. Since we are counselors, friends, co-workers, and relatives of gays, we need to educate ourselves and confront our fears of being close to members of our own sex and to gay people. One way to learn more about gay lifestyles, relationships and achievements is to read some of the excellent books which are now available. They are also a good source for learning about the effect of gay oppression on individuals and their self-concepts.

FOR GAYS/LESBIANS: All of these books address the gay lifestyle in a way that validates the experiences of gay men and lesbians, thus strengthening the gay self-image. This list also provides resource materials for the gay community (directories, bibliographies, community information).

Finally, this section was written for individuals who do not identify themselves as gay at this time, but feel that the gay lifestyle may be an option for them.

GAY AIDS FOR COUNSELORS, compiled by Gay Task Force, ALA. (Barbara Gittings--GTF: Box 2383, Philadelphia, PA 19103). (1979). Compilation of books, pamphlets, articles, audio-visuals and organizations not restricted to alcohol and other drug field.

A GAY BIBLIOGRAPHY, compiled by Gay Task Force (above address). (1979). 75¢. Selective list of non-fiction books, articles, pamphlets, periodicals, audiovisuals, and directories.

GAY MEN: THE SOCIOLOGY OF MALE HOMOSEXUALITY, M. Levine. (Harper & Row/New York, NY). (1979). 346 Pp. $5.95. A collection of articles describing different facets of the gay man's experience. Written largely by members of the gay community for a nonprofessional audience.

GAYELLOW PAGES. (Renaissance House, Box 292 Village Station, New York, NY 10014). (1979). 208 Pp. $5.00. (National edition). $2.00 (Regional editions). $2.50 (Canada). Classified directories of gay/lesbian organizations, businesses and services in U.S. and Canada. National edition & five regional editions: Northeast; New York-New Jersey; West Coast; Midwest; South.

THE LESBIAN PRIMER, by L. Diamond. (Women's Educational Media: P.O. Box 533, Salem, MA 01970). (1979). 82 Pp. $3.95. Well illustrated book of facts, "myth-conceptions", games, quizzes, glossary and resources. Written for lesbians, their families and friends.

LESBIAN/WOMAN, by D. Martin and P. Lyon. (Bantam/New York, NY). (1972). 319 Pp. $1.95. Written by two lesbian lovers who discuss what it is like to grow up gay, to "come out", to share a life with another woman in a male-dominated society, and to be a lesbian mother.

LOVING SOMEONE GAY, by D. Clark. (Signet/ New York, NY). (1978). 275 Pp. $2.25. Written by a gay clinical psychologist for the families and friends of gays. Helps caring non-gays to confront their own fears and prejudices and tear down barriers to communication and love. Also by the same author, LIVING GAY, (Celestial Arts/ Millbrae, CA). (1979). 192 Pp. $9.95.

NATIONAL GAY HEALTH DIRECTORY, by C. Ryan and J. Brossart. (National Gay Health Coalition Educational Foundation: P.O. Box 677, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011). (1979). 52 Pp. $2.95. A compendium of health services for lesbians and gay men. Includes key to indicate facilities exclusively for gays and those that are not gay-identified but do provide services.

OUR RIGHT TO LOVE: A LESBIAN RESOURCE BOOK. (Prentice Hall/Englewood Cliffs, NJ). (1978). 318 Pp. $6.95. An illustrated comprehensive guide for lesbians, students, teachers, parents, feminists, legislators, counselors, and movement organizers. This book reflects the special concerns of lesbians in all areas of their lives. Contains an article on drinking problems in the lesbian community.

WOMAN PLUS WOMAN, by D. Klaich. (Morrow/ New York, NY). (1974). 257 Pp. $3.50. An objective discussion and analysis of lesbianism. Includes Sappho, Gertrude Stein and others. Good overall book.

WORD IS OUT. 130 min., color, 16 mm, 1978. Distributed by New Yorker Films: 16 West 61 St., New York, NY 10023. (212) 247-6110. A documentary film of interviews with twenty-six lesbians and gay men representing various lifestyles and ranging in age from 20 to 79. In their stories, these people relate their experiences as gay men and women living in a heterosexual world. Write for rental and sale price information.

NATIONAL RESOURCES

National Association of Gay Alcoholism
Professionals (NAGAP)
P.O. Box 376
Oakland, NJ 07436

The purpose of NAGAP is to provide a support and communication network for gay alcoholism professionals, whether openly gay or not, and for any gay person interested in the field of alcoholism. Also serves as a resource and referral clearinghouse for any alcoholism agency wanting to better serve the needs of gay clients. Write for NAGAP Newsletter subscription information.

National Gay Task Force (NGTF)
80 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10011
(212) 741-1010

The largest gay civil rights organization in the country. Distributes pamphlets and packets on "coming out", gay rights, etc. Pamphlets entitled, "About Coming Out" (10¢), "Twenty Questions About Homosexuality" (50¢), and "Answers to Parent's Questions About Homosexuality" (10¢) are especially useful to both gays and non-gays.

TUCKER
P.O. Box 4623
Arlington, VA 22204

Distributes pamphlets entitled, "The Homosexual Alcoholic" (19¢), "Directory of Meetings for Gay Recovering Alcoholics" ($1.00), "Directory of Facilities and Services for Gay Alcoholics and Drug Abusers ($1.00), plus current supplements for every directory ($1.00 each).

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

Many cities have gay Alcoholics Anonymous groups for lesbians and gay men. If you are interested, the AA Intergroup office or answering service listed in the telephone book under "Alcoholics Anonymous" can connect you to gay AA groups that might exist in your community. For more information regarding alcohol and other drug abuse, contact the prevention and intervention agencies in your community. Local alcoholism councils and gay centers may be able to provide you with helpful information. Resource lists provided in books and periodicals can also direct you to appropriate local agencies.

ALTERNATIVE SOCIAL SETTINGS

Given that bars often are an unhealthy environment for gay men and lesbians to socialize in, some communities have established non-alcoholic coffee houses. These coffee houses, which serve as a positive alternative to the bars, often are located in churches and community centers. We encourage you to organize non-alcoholic alternatives in your communities.

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